# The Cosmological Function And The King God

Examination and exploration of the natural world led to the inevitable conclusion that natural events happen as a result of knowable causes and effects, which engendered the idea that the universe functions according to certain knowable, immutable laws. A dropped object falls to the ground; water seeks its own level; decay is the default process of life[[1]](#footnote-1); cause always precedes effect.

The reasoning seems to have been something like:

1. There are universal laws of the natural world which are always true and unbreakable.
2. Rules of behavior result from the ordering of thoughts by conscious will.
3. Therefore, the universal laws of nature must have been formulated, enacted, and are continually enforced, by an overarching, controlling consciousness.

### Protology: Architectural Myths of Origin

The Cosmological Function is thus associated with *architectural* creation/origin myths, in which the physical universe is conceived, manifested, structured, and ordered by the *conscious agency* of a deity or deities. The manifested deity or deities (who often arise *increatus,* “uncreated”) set about to build the universe according to some design.

Thus, *all automatic origin myths become architectural at some point.* This may happen quickly, as we see in the first line of Genesis, “In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth.”[[2]](#footnote-2) The first phrase, “In the beginning, God,” is an automatic origin myth; neither God’s origin nor nature is explained — it is assumed, he is *increatus* (uncreated) . The remainder of the passage begins an architectural origin myth; the physical universe and everything in it brought into existence through the conscious actions of God, for his own reasons and purposes.

The overarching, controlling consciousness of architectural myths of origin was almost everywhere assigned to a male deity in preference to a female. Edith Hall, Professor in the Department of Classics and Centre for Hellenic Studies at King’s College, London, tells Bettany Hughes:

Walled cities start to be built all around the, sort of, Mediterranean world, and you get large armies; you get very powerful kings; you get accumulation of money and capital. You get something you've got to defend, something really worth fighting for. And violence, in terms of policing the world, becomes — I think — much more common. Mass violence, between different communities. And that's the moment at which you start to get these big, masculine gods, that's I think a reflection of a much more militaristic culture on the ground.[[3]](#footnote-3)

But why? Shlain suggests that it was because big-game hunting generally fell to males:

The prolonged childhood of their progeny precluded most women from hunting. A mother could not leave her young for long and a crying baby could not accompany a hunting expedition. Among other social predators such as wolves, lions, and killer whales, the females actively participate in both hunting and killing. Humans became the first group of social predators in which females left this critical task to the males. A hunter must maintain a singularity of purpose when focused on prey; a mother must keep a field awareness of all that is going on around her.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Thus, according to Shlain, the average male became more goal-oriented and task-focused, while the average female became more process-oriented and multi-tasking[[5]](#footnote-5). He also contends that the perpetuation of culture became the purview of mothers, while socializing the young became the task of fathers.

Besides providing her young with breast milk, a mother became responsible for imparting the knowledge of the *culture*, imprinting upon the infant's mind essential lessons regarding love, honor, respect, courage, loyalty, honesty, curiosity, playfulness, and self-esteem. To enhance their offspring's chances of survival, the females also reached across the growing divide separating the sexes and engaged the males of the tribe in the job of *socializing* children.[[6]](#footnote-6) [emphasis added]

Society, by its very nature, is a set of permissions and prohibitions dictated to individuals by the collective will of the body politic. Thus, the argument goes:

1. The laws of nature are formulated, enacted, and continually enforced, by a Father God.
2. Society is bounded by laws, just as nature is bounded by laws.
3. Because males are more logically minded than females[[7]](#footnote-7), it is in the male nature to explore and apprehend natural laws.
4. Familiarity with the essence and functioning of natural law qualifies males to conceive, enact, and enforce societal laws.

(Yes, there is more than a hint of a circular argument here, but, as Gary Zukav points out, mythos “… follows a much more permissive set of rules”[[8]](#footnote-8) than does logos.)

The fifth and final point is the least palatable. Because, as Shain says, “Hunting demands ‘cold-bloodedness’ tinged with cruelty; nurturance requires emotional generosity combined with warmth,”[[9]](#footnote-9) and hunters are perforce male[[10]](#footnote-10); males are, therefore, naturally better equipped to enforce the sometimes rigorously inequitable and unjust rules of society in order to ensure the greatest good to the greatest number for the majority of the time.[[11]](#footnote-11)

This has also been supposed to explain that “The male brain tends to be more efficient to lateralize and compartmentalize, which has the advantage of making him more task-focused. The female brain has more [nerve] connections and constantly cross-signals and takes in more, so it tends to see and feel more than the male brain.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

An example: It so often happens that when a hetero-husband is discovered to have cheated on his spouse, his response is something like, “It was one time; it has nothing to do with *us*!” He apparently literally believes that his dalliance with another woman is completely and utterly unrelated to his relationship with his wife. The spouse, on the other hand, tends to respond along the lines of “It has *everything* to do with us!” In her awareness, *he is her husband at all times and in all situations[[13]](#footnote-13)*, whether she is physically present with him or not; as far as she is concerned, he might just has well have engaged in sex with the other woman while his wife was in the same room.

It is not that either of them is more-or-less “right” about the situation; they simply have conflicting understandings of the circumstances. Shlain concludes:

Evolution, in time, equipped men and women emotionally to respond differently to the same stimuli. This resulted in men and women having different perceptions of the world, survival strategies, styles of commitment, and, ultimately, different ways of *knowing:* the way of the hunter/killer and the way of the gatherer/nurturer.[[14]](#footnote-14)

## The Divine Father And The Demotion Of The Goddess

Shlain asserts that there was a devaluation of the contributions of women in the maintenance of the community:

The necessity of hunting larger and more dangerous animals … meant that hunters had to be bolder. The female, on the other hand, performed repetitious routines that had little glory or reward and kept her *immanent.*[[15]](#footnote-15)Women's work was not inspiring because it was not dangerous, even though everyone tacitly recognized its value to the tribe's overall well-being.[[16]](#footnote-16)

This led to a gradual diminution of the power of the Primal Goddess in mythological stories. As Hesiod reports the outcome of the civil war among the Greek gods in his *Theogeny*, “Now King of the Gods, Zeus was wiser than any other god or any mortal….”[[17]](#footnote-17)

This social change in the status of the female is reflected in numerous myths within all societies. An example of a myth that encodes this transition is the Greek tale of Demeter and Persephone.

Persephone is given away by her father, Zeus, to his brother (and her uncle), Hades, as a wife. Neither Persephone nor her mother, Demeter, are consulted about, *nor even informed of*,the arrangement. Hades simply collects (abducts) Persephone one day and carries her off to the Underworld. Hermes witnesses the event, but keeps quiet about it.[[18]](#footnote-18) Demeter, noting Persephone’s absence, seeks her out only to be told she should not be upset, but that she should instead feel joy at having such a powerful and prestigious new son-in-law. The message is clear; the girl is inconsequential; the male is paramount.

Demeter, in her sadness, abandons Olympus for the world of Men, and decrees an embargo on the Earth’s fertility — seeds will not germinate, fruits will not flower. She is exerting a fundamental power of the Primal Goddess by controlling natural processes. As the Earth becomes sere and barren, mortals are not able to make sacrifices to the gods, an intolerable state of affairs. When Zeus finally takes notice that something is awry, he engages each of the other Olympians, in turn, to plead and negotiate with Demeter to relent, but she remains steadfast.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Zeus ultimately sends Hermes to the Underworld to command Hades to release Persephone from the “contract”. Hermes finds her there, despondent and dejected. It is critical to take note at this juncture that *Persephone has taken no action whatsoever to extricate herself from her undesired circumstance*. Again, the message is clear: as a female you are powerless and without agency — if something bad happens to you, endure, and wait patiently for a male to come to your aid.

Persephone is delighted at Hermes’ news and immediately prepares for departure. Hades ostensibly releases her, but in doing so, fools her by encouraging her to eat a bit of pomegranate before leaving, thus dooming her to spend part of each year with him in the Underworld.

Once she is (temporarily) reunited with her mother[[20]](#footnote-20), Demeter is forced to release her stranglehold on the Earth and allow it to bloom and thrive once more. Tellingly, she is then required to reveal the secrets of growing things to the male gods[[21]](#footnote-21), so that she will never again be able to hold them hostage in such a way.

Persephone’s obligation to remain consorted with Hades, and Demeter’s forced surrender of her Primal Goddess power are both tacit signals to the audience that the male has taken the dominant position and the female is well-advised to bend to masculine whim and will.

Shades of these same messages are to be found in the Norse story of the theft of Idunn’s Apples, in which Loki conspires with a Frost Giant to spirit the goddess away, depriving the Asgardians of the rejuvenating effects of the apples she dispenses. When (as always happens), Loki’s mischief is revealed, he is forced to undertake her rescue to undo the damage he’s done. He finds her in the giant’s castle, sitting dejected in a dark, cold room (*à la* Persephone), having taken no action on her own behalf to rectify her situation. She is returned to Asgard, where she blithely resumes dispensing her apples, evincing no signs whatsoever of trauma as a result of her ordeal, implying that she was too naïve even to recognize the danger she had been in.

Another implicit message concerning the diminution of the authority of the Primal Goddess is found in the story of Artemis and Aktaion, in which the hapless prince of Thebes[[22]](#footnote-22) chances to glimpse the goddess at her bath. Infuriated at such an imposition, the Huntress transforms Aktaion into a stag and he is then brought down by his own hunting hounds.

Here, again, Artemis displays a power of the Primal Goddess, to exercise violence in the punishment of wrong-doing, but the message is far more subtle than that. Artemis is an avowed virgin[[23]](#footnote-23), and her agency in the male-dominated environment of Olympus is predicated upon her retaining this condition. Since the males of her society equate even simply being seen naked as tantamount to engaging in sexual congress, she cannot allow anyone to know that Aktaion has encountered her thus. What *actually* transpired carries far less weight than what may appear to have occurred. A whiff of scandal becomes an inescapable social stench. She defends her virginity by violent means, not so much because she values it in-and-of-itself, but for the agency it affords her in society[[24]](#footnote-24).

Like Kybele of the Phrygians and Kali in the Hindu tradition, Artemis is fully capable of violent action; however, the difference is her motivation in this instance for violence. She is not (as with Kali), defending the world from a dangerous threat; Artemis’ motivation is far more materialistic and socially constructed[[25]](#footnote-25).

The ultimate demotion (degradation?) is found in Aphrodite’s story. She is reported to have arisen (not been born) from the foam issuing from the testicles of Ouranos (Uranus), severed and thrown into the sea[[26]](#footnote-26),[[27]](#footnote-27),[[28]](#footnote-28). In the story of her “marriage” to Hephaestus (via an act of extortion against Zeus) and her dalliance with Ares (whom she preferred and desired to be united with[[29]](#footnote-29)), she is depicted as a purely sexual creature, desired *solely* for her pulchritude. (In one retelling, after Hephaestus has left Olympus for his daily work, Ares goes to Aphrodite’s bedchamber and merely motions to her — all the effort needed on his part to summon her to lovemaking[[30]](#footnote-30)).

Discovering the pair *in flagrante delicto*, Hephaestus immediately summons Zeus to witness her “betrayal”, and demands that the entirety of the bride-price he gave for her be returned[[31]](#footnote-31). The other male gods, attracted by the commotion, jape and jest, admitting that they would gladly endure Ares’ humiliation in this situation for a chance to sample Aphrodite’s charms, themselves — and all this while the goddess is entrapped in Hephaestus’ snare and cannot extricate herself to flee from their leering and jeering.

Thus, the male in many societies was established as “an acknowledged despot … [taking] over the dominant role and [learning] to use every available means to sustain it.”[[32]](#footnote-32) Exploration of the processes of the natural world and the development of discernment of the relationship between cause and effect fell to males because they were exempt from the requirements of child-bearing and child-rearing.

The human male tended to focus on developing logos-knowledge over mythos-wisdom, and gained a (sometimes utterly illusory) sense of the power of agency in personal and collective destiny. This, combined with unplanned responses to biological necessities and haphazard adaptation to environmental pressures, conspired to create a state of gender inequity and injustice in many human societies, which mythology was sometimes coöpted to validate and perpetuate.

### A Structured, Orderly World

The architectural aspect of protology (origin myths) appears in some of the earliest written accounts of mytho-religious literature. Most of these record the origin and nature of the structure and order of the physical universe; enumerate the specific actions of a seminal male deity[[33]](#footnote-33) who brought it all about; and emphasize that organizing physical principles and processes are *crucial* for a smoothly functioning reality that is both conducive and kindly to human existence.

Norse mythology reflects this model when Odin and his brothers construct the Nine Realms from the body of the Frost Giant, Ymir; and, of course, the Tanakh[[34]](#footnote-34) enumerates in great detail in the book of Genesis the order in which Yahweh creates the various physical aspects of the universe.

Reproduction of the illustration "The Great Chain of Being" from the book Rhetorica Christiana by Didacus Valades

Public DomainThis was also captured in the European Medieval concept of the Great Chain of Being, a hierarchical structure of the physical universe, both animate and inanimate, progressing upward from minerals at the bottom to God at the pinnacle.

The underlying message is that the universe has the structure it does for good reasons, and if you’re going to try to manipulate it, you should do so intelligently, with a thorough understanding of the possible and potential effects your actions will produce. This is the other face of the Divine Father: the Moral Authoritarian; the King God who has ordained the universe to be as it is, decreed that it is perfect as-built, and demands that his order be honored and his natural laws be observed and obeyed.[[35]](#footnote-35)

In *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction*, Geraldine (Harris) Pinch, faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford, discusses the Memphite Theology, sourced to an ancient scroll which was partially duplicated on a stele known as the Shabaqo Stone.[[36]](#footnote-36) She relates that in this account, the creator deity, Ptah, is linked,

… with a whole series of deities who represent elements of the primeval world … [including] Ptah-Nun and Ptah-Naunet, the male and female aspects of the dark, watery chaos of the primeval ocean. The potential for intelligent life was inherent in this ocean, but was not realized until the spirit of the creator attained awareness.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Note here the echoes of animistic thought; the quintessential material from which physical reality will arise or be constructed is described as a mysterious “stuff” which has no nature of its own, but holds in suspension all possible things, awaiting a directing consciousness to bring them into being.

This is strikingly similar to Hindu cosmogony, as when Campbell quotes from the Upanishads, “In the beginning there was only the Great Self, reflected in the form of a person. Reflecting, it found nothing but itself, and its first word was, ‘This am I.'”.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Pinch tells of Atum of Heliopolis, who, as described in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts:

… acted as both father and mother, by giving himself an erection, taking his ‘seed’ into his mouth, and spitting out the first divine couple Shu and Tefnut. The androgynous nature of the creator was sometimes made clearer by personifying the hand of Atum as a goddess who united with his penis to create life.[[39]](#footnote-39)

A more specific relationship to the Cosmological Function is found in the retelling of the story in the Memphite Theology, in which “… Ptah is said to bring deities, people, and animals into being by devising them in his heart and naming them with his tongue.”[[40]](#footnote-40) This power of *divine speech* is ubiquitous in architectural creation myths, and serves to illustrate the awareness of the earliest societies of the power of first spoken, and then written, language.[[41]](#footnote-41) Pinch emphasizes that “… the ‘divine words’ of Ptah can, like hieroglyphs, *make thoughts real*”[[42]](#footnote-42) [emphasis added].

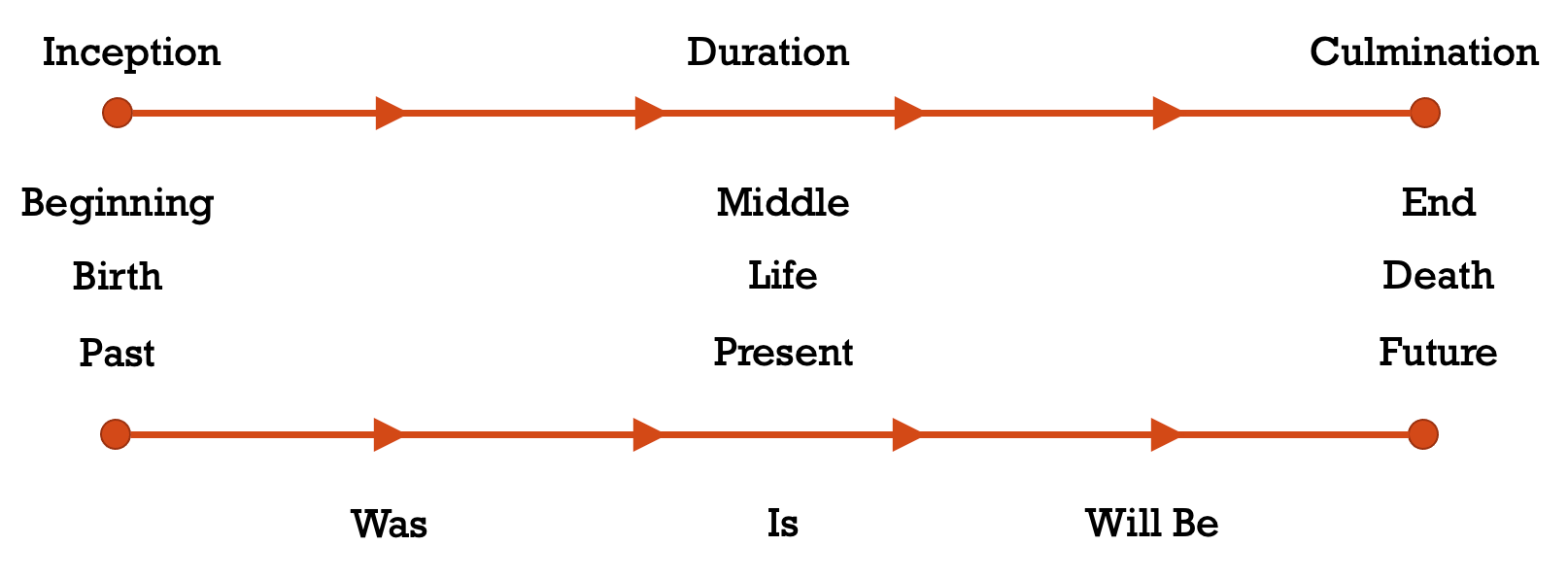
If we posit that “thoughts” in this sense, refers to “cogitations born of contemplation and exploration”, then the concept is demonstrably logos-oriented, since experience and feeling are indelibly linked to mythos. Speech (and later written language) is a structured and ordered expression of the products of asking questions and discovering answers, clearly a function of logos-knowledge. Thus, a structured and orderly world, created by structured and orderly thoughts, realized by structured and orderly language, *must* be the product of the agency and actions of a male deity, himself functioning in a structured and orderly fashion.

Pinch observes that, “On one level, the Memphite Theology can be seen as a classic validatory myth. It justifies the continued existence of institutions such as kingship and the priesthood by giving them divine origins,”[[43]](#footnote-43) but she also points out that, “… local deities of both genders achieved the status of creator, [and] where a temple had two principle deities, both could be given creation myths,”[[44]](#footnote-44) and that, although “Egyptian cosmogonies usually list several, apparently contradictory primal events, [they] do not seem to have regarded their creation myths as literally true, [but] more like highly charged metaphors, drawn from the natural world.”[[45]](#footnote-45),[[46]](#footnote-46)

This power of divine speech also appears in the *Popol Vuh*, the Mayan account of creation, wherein “Creation begun with a declaration of the first words,”[[47]](#footnote-47), and of course, in the first chapter of the Hebrew Bible, “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light,”[[48]](#footnote-48) as well as the first verse of the Christian New Testament Book of John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God … and the Word was made flesh….”[[49]](#footnote-49)

## Linear and Cyclical Time

Most logos-structured worldviews see time as linear, following a path from a starting point to a conclusion, an ending which is inevitable, inescapable, and absolutely final.



In addition, most cultures which use an alphabet writing modality also depict the flow of time as left-to-right (or, more rarely, top-down), so that on a timeline, earlier dates are to the left of later ones.

This is reflected in many mythologies which have an *eschatological* mode, both at an individual and a universal level. An eschatology[[50]](#footnote-50) is any system of stories concerning last, or final, matters, such as an apocalypse, a judgment, an afterlife, etc. These mythologies purport to describe or predict for an individual what to expect after death (predicated upon a moral-ethical assessment of the conduct of their lifetime). However, they as well elucidate what form a general “end of the world” will take, and whatever (if anything) follows — which is usually expected to be utterly different and generally “better” than the current situation (at least for those who qualify to partake in it).

All of these systems tend to have strong architectural protological elements; a Creator brought the universe into being, is watching over it as it functions, and will either bring about or at least preside over its demise when its function comes to an end.

It is easy to see how this worldview came about. In everyday, logos-oriented experience, everything has a beginning, an existence of some duration, and an ending. Plants sprout, grow and flourish, and finally wither; animals are born, live and interact, and eventually die. Even mountains — the very rocks, themselves — are not permanent, but rise, maintain for a time (a very long time, in human terms, but a finite time), and erode away. It makes sense that this becomes entrenched in a culture’s “understanding” of “how things work.”

Other worldviews, however, see time and existence as more-or-less cyclical (at least when it is functioning properly). The totality may be subdivided into lesser units which have a finite nature, but the essence of being — the nature of existence — is, itself, unbounded having no beginning and no ending. It is *transcendent*.

Try imagining a canvas so large that an infinite number of paintings of any individual size may be created on it, but regardless how many paintings are painted on it, there is always room for one more, of any size. The mind literally rebels.

A white and black analog clock, showing the time as approximately 7 minutes past 10.

Public DomainA more practical example can be seen in a standard analog clock. Each cycle of the minute hand around the clock denotes an hour of time, and each cycle of the hour hand defines some version of a “day”. But the circle of the clock’s circumference, itself, has no beginning and no end. If an analog clock were able to function in perpetuity[[51]](#footnote-51), the minute and hour hands would cycle around it endlessly, ceaselessly marking out individual minutes and hours, but never coming to an end of their journey.

Similarly, a wall-calendar with 12 sheets, each divided into regular arrangements of squares beginning with January 1 in the upper-left of the first page and concluding with December 31 at the lower-right of the last page tracks the passage of a year, but time, itself, does not come to a stop at the end of the last page; a new calendar with a similar structure replaces the previous one, and another year is counted through (again, theoretically in perpetuity).

Illustration of the Mayan Long-Count calendar carving.

Public DomainMisunderstanding of this principle is why so many people incorrectly believed that “time” would “end” when the Mayan Long-Count calendar “ran out” on December 21, 2012; the famous circular carving is simply a depiction of a very long period of time (5,125 years), but each of those periods is believed to be preceded by a previous 5,125-year period, and it is assumed that each wil be succeeded by a following 5,125-year period, for as long as the universe exists.

The Ancient Egyptian view of time was primarily cyclical on a universal level[[52]](#footnote-52). Again, it is not hard to see why this would be so: each day the Sun rose in the east, travelled across the sky, and set in the west. Each daylight period was followed by a dark period in which the Moon[[53]](#footnote-53) and various arrangements of stars (constellations) were visible, also traversing the sky from east-to-west.

The nighttime period, however, had more variety than the daylight period; the shape of the Moon changed in a regular, predictable cycle, and which constellations were in the sky also shifted over time. Counting from one Full Moon to the next yielded a count of about 29 cycles of the Sun rising and setting. Counting from the night when a given constellation was directly overhead in the middle of the night, to the next time it was in that precise position again yielded about 365 risings of the Sun.[[54]](#footnote-54)

So, even though the Sun was “born” each morning and “died” each night, and the Moon was renewed on a monthly basis, and the heavens cycled on a yearly scale, these cycles, themselves, never came to a stop — unless there was an eclipse, which universally terrified logos-thinking humans all over the world for thousands of years, until it was noted that these events, too, occurred on a regular, predictable cycle.

So, a plant may sprout, flourish, and wither, a person may be born, thrive for a time, and die, but time itself continued to flow. Thus, while Egyptian mythology does have an origin story (several, in fact; see above), and while it does have an eschatological mode for people, animals, and objects, it does not foresee and end for the universe, itself.

Hindu cosmogony takes a similar view, but accounts for much longer divisions of perpetuity. In this view, infinite time is divided into the *Yuga*[[55]](#footnote-55) Cycle a series of repeating cycles each of which is called a “*maha yuga*”[[56]](#footnote-56) (or sometimes a “*chatur yuga*”), and which the Vedas tell us comprise 4,320,000 years.

Each Maha Yuga is further divided into four smaller yugas: *Krita* (sometimes *Satya*) *Yuga*, *Treta Yuga*, *Dvapara Yuga*, and *Kali Yuga*. However, these divisions are not equal in length, nor in character; in order, each represents 40-30-20-10 percent of a Maha Yuga. Below is a table for clarity.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Yuga** | **Percentage of Maha Yuga** | **Length (years)** |
| Krita | 40% | 1,728,000 |
| Treta | 30% | 1,296,000 |
| Dvapara | 20% | 864,000 |
| Kali | 10% | 432,000 |
| ***Total*** | ***100%*** | ***4,320,000*** |

As shown, each succeeding yuga is shorter than the preceding one, and the conditions in the universe, and in human society, progressively worsen as each yuga passes into the next. (Unfortunately, the details are far too complex to detail here, but an interesting point to ponder is whether human society degenerates because the universal conditions worsen, or whether it works the other way around).

For our purposes, the important point is that at the end of each Kali yuga, there is a sort-of “resetting” period, after which a new Maha Yuga begins, starting with a new Krita Yuga. One thousand Maha Yugas (4,320,000,000; 4.32 billion years), represents one day in and even longer cycle![[57]](#footnote-57),[[58]](#footnote-58)

Interestingly, we are said to currently be in a Kali Yuga (surprise, surprise), which began 5,124 years ago (does that number seem somehow familiar?) in 3102 BCE.[[59]](#footnote-59)

Finally, the Cosmological Function is frequently where the explanation for the creation and purpose of human beings is to be found. In the Sumerian account of Atrahasis, humankind is created purposely to function “… as short-lived drudges to do the work … on earth.”[[60]](#footnote-60). In the *Popol Vuh*, the creation of humankind only occurs after three previous failed attempts, and their purpose is “… as essential mediators between this world and that of their patron deities and ancestors.”[[61]](#footnote-61) In the Tanakh, humans are created (male first and female later) as the pinnacle of God’s material creation, to serve as keepers of the Garden of Eden, and only later become mortal and subject to hard labor through their own failings. The Vedas reveal that humans were simply a part of the original material manifestation of the universe, but the ease and quality of their physical existence alters with the changing quality of morality through the successive yugas.

1. Later formalized as the Second Law of Thermodynamics: “The universe tends towards disorder.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Genesis 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Divine Women*, episode 1, "When God Was A Girl," narrated by Bettany Hughes, aired April 11, 2012 (first broadcast April 11, 2012), on British Broadcasting Corporation, The Open University. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Leonard Shlain, *The Alphabet versus the Goddess: The Conflict between Word and Image* (New York: Viking/ Penguin, 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. I am fully aware that these statements border on being baldly gender-binary and over-simplified; for the sake of brevity and clarity, I have chosen to risk this perception in preference to the torturous circumlocutions of language necessary to give full-and-proper attention to diversity and inclusion. I humbly beg for grace from the reader. Also, when directly quoting sources, I do not feel myself empowered to drastically change the original author’s text, but consider myself bound to report it as-written. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Leonard Shlain, *The Alphabet versus the Goddess: The Conflict between Word and Image* (New York: Viking/ Penguin, 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. I’m just reporting the ancient attitude; don’t shoot the messenger. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics* (New York: Morrow, 1979). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Leonard Shlain, *The Alphabet versus the Goddess: The Conflict between Word and Image* (New York: Viking/ Penguin, 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. “The prolonged childhood of their progeny precluded most women from hunting.” (Shlain, *The Alphabet*). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The ubiquitous declaration of Utilitarianism. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Michael Gurian, *What Could He Be Thinking?: How a Man's Mind Really Works* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. “Out of sight, out of mind” is no excuse. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Leonard Shlain, *The Alphabet versus the Goddess: The Conflict between Word and Image* (New York: Viking/ Penguin, 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. “Remaining within; indwelling; inherent; being within the limits of possible experience or knowledge; present as a natural and permanent part of something”; from Late Latin roots meaning “to stay”. In other words, woman never fully *becomes*, she is always *in the process of becoming*. Man, by killing, completes himself; woman, by contrast, never reaches completion as a physical or psychic being. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Leonard Shlain, *The Alphabet versus the Goddess: The Conflict between Word and Image* (New York: Viking/ Penguin, 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Mark P. O Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, 3rd ed. (New York: Longman, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. There are two important aspects to this. First, Hermes keeping quiet emphasizes that as Zeus’ daughter, Persephone is his possession to deal and dispense with as he sees fit, free from any interference from anyone else; second, Zeus is King of the Gods, and Hermes is in no position whatsoever to question nor criticize Zeus’s actions. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. It is worth noting here, as well, that Zeus, himself, never “stoops” to dealing with Demeter directly — to do so would be to tacitly admit that she is exerting a power he has no ability to overcome. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Encoding the social norm that, once married, a girl may visit with her mother, but inherently she is her husband’s possession and must always ultimately “cleave unto” him. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. It is possible that this part of the myth also encodes the fact that men eventually took over agricultural practices (at least on the largest scales) from women. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The Royal House of Thebes is uniquely cursed to misfortune in Greek mytho-history. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Which is what enables her to engage in a male activity such as hunting with a skill equal to that of her twin brother, Apollo, even though she is female. This is a fascinating indication that (at least in the Classical Greek mind), the closest a female could come to being male was to be a virgin. Apparently, it was the *act of participating in coitus* (willingly or otherwise) that made a female a *woman*, and thus stripped her of at least part of her divine nature (not to mention her socio-political value to her father). There is an echo of this in the Persephone story, as well; having eaten a bit of fruit (which widely symbolizes *life*, *fertility*, and *logos-knowledge* throughout mythology), she has “sullied” herself by accepting into her body an aspect of the profane, material world (a fruit is, after all, a *seed*, and thus symbolic of semen), and thus is no longer fully able to enjoy the benefits of divinity. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Again, there is an echo of this in the Roman tradition of the Vestal Virgins, who did not necessarily value their virginal state for its own sake, but for the social capital it afforded them — and the horrific consequence society would impose upon them for not maintaining it. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. It should be noted, however, that in one version of the story of Artemis and Orion, he boasts that he will kill every living thing, and Artemis slays him to defend nature from his arrogance — a very Durga-Kali act with a much more Mother-Goddess motivation. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The symbolism here so rich an entire essay could be dedicated solely to its discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Though she is often referred to as a daughter of Zeus, she actually *predates* Zeus and the generation of the Olympians, thus acknowledging that the human sex drive is fundamental and far older than any cognitive functions associated with logos. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Also, note the parallels to Gaia’s *increatus* coalescence from the primordial chaos as the *prima causa* of the physical universe. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Again, the symbolism of the association of the primal sex drive with the endeavor of warfare would involve an entire discussion of its own. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. This is also reflective of the Classical Greek notions that 1) women had a stronger sex-drive than men; and 2) they were utterly incapable of controlling it, so the task of doing so devolved to men. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Essentially declaring, “I’m not satisfied with my purchase and want my money back.” [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Reay Tannahill, *Sex in History* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Who is sometimes *increatus* (à la Yahweh), and sometimes a member of a second, or even third, generation of entities created by or emergent from an *increatus* Primal Goddess*.* It is worth noting that Zeus is never really presented as a creator deity; mostly, he is depicted as having wrested control of the extant universe from his elders, Gaia and the Titans. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The “Hebrew Bible”, which forms the basis of the Christian “Old Testament”. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. This morphs into one aspect of the Sociological Function, as well, where it takes the form of the dictum that social institutions and norms are also divinely decreed (or at least inspired), and as such are valid, justified, and transgressed only at great risk or in highly distinctive circumstances. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Joseph Campbell, "The Message of The Myth," interview by Bill Moyers, *Joseph Campbell and The Power of Myth*, produced by Joan Konner and Alvin H. Perlmutter, aired 1988 (first broadcast 1988), on Athena. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 48-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Shlain also devotes several pages to a discussion of the advent of language and its impact upon social norms, especially as regards the development of division of labor and value along gender lines. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. This highlights a distinctive feature of Egyptian mythology: often shows elements of both animism and theism. So much so, that one might almost declare Egyptian practices as being of a transitory nature between the two forms of spiritual expression. The composite representation of many Egyptian deities as beings with human bodies but animal heads gives further credence to this observation (as well as perhaps revealing a tacit admission that in many ways *homo sapiens* are physically human, but still fundamentally animalistic in their psychic character?). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Allen J. Christenson, trans., *Popol Vuh: Sacred Book of the Quiché Maya People* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Gen 1:3 KJV. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. John 1:1-14 KJV. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Greek *éschato(s)* “last”. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Note: I am purposely avoiding the word “eternity” here, because, as Campbell pointed out to Bill Moyers: “Eternity isn’t some later time; eternity isn’t a long time; eternity has *nothing to do with time*. Eternity is that dimension of *here* and *now* which *thinking in time cuts out* … and the experience of eternity *right here and now* is the function of life.” (Campbell, "The Message," interview, *Joseph Campbell*) [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Though it was definitely linear for human beings. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Which was also sometimes visible in the daytime sky, whereas the Sun was never visible at night. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ever more precise measurements eventually led the Egyptians to identify a “month” as 29½ days long (a “synodic” month), and a year as comprising 365¼ days (a “solar” year); these figures have been progressively more precisely defined, and, in fact, change over time, as the Earth’s rotational and orbital motions are not perpetually constant. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Loosely translated as “age”, the word is ultimately from Sanskrit and means “a yoke”, as in a joining of two things, or a “period of time”. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Sanskrit; “great age”, as in “extensive period of time”. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Donna Rosenberg, *World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics*, 2nd ed. (Lincolnwood, Ill.: NTC Pub. Group, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. It is also worth noting that most versions recount that each Maha Yuga is identical in every aspect and particular to every other. Much like listening to a song on infinite repeat, the cycle continues indefinitely, but never varies in character. This, in the Buddha’s view, was the very description of horror. Any parent who has ever endured a Disney movie being replayed repeatedly for an entire day surely understands the Buddha’s point. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Joscelyn Godwin, *Atlantis and the Cycles of Time: Prophecies, Traditions, and Occult Revelations* (Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions, 2011), 300-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Allen J. Christenson, trans., *Popol Vuh: Sacred Book of the Quiché Maya People* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)